

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009

Statement on the 45th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act

July 2, 2009

Forty-five years ago today, President Johnson signed into law historic legislation that moved America closer toward fulfilling the dream of our founding, a dream of opportunity, equality, and justice for all. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended legal discrimination, helping grant all Americans equal justice under the law, no matter what their gender or the color of their skin.

The Civil Rights Act was born during Freedom Summer 1963, but its passage was only possible because generations of Americans of all backgrounds stood up, sat down, and marched in freedom's cause. Once it was signed into law, a renewed pledge was made to all Americans not to deny any man a seat at a lunch counter, not to deny any woman an opportunity in the workplace, and not to deny any child a chance to make the most of their God-given potential.

But while the Civil Rights Act opened doors of freedom and opportunity, we know that far too many inequities and barriers remain in the African American community and across this country. And we must continue to break down these barriers in our laws, our policies, and our hearts so that we cannot only fulfill the full promise of the Civil Rights Act, but perfect the Union that our Founders created 233 years ago this week.

Categories: Statements by the President : Civil Rights Act of 1964, 45th anniversary.

Subjects: Civil rights : Civil Rights Act of 1964, 45th anniversary; Civil rights : Minorities :: African-American civil rights movement; Civil rights : Minorities :: Minority rights and ethnic tolerance; Civil rights : Racial equality; Civil rights : Women's rights and gender equality.

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